

"The things that we love
tell us who we are."
Saint Thomas Aquinas

FEBRUARY 2020

The Love of God

February is typically the month that most people might associate with the theme of love. In this respect, on February 10th, we celebrate the Feast of Saint Scholastica, a woman of great love.

The story is told of how Saint Scholastica loved meeting with her brother Saint Benedict so they could share spiritual insights. According to the *Dialogues* of Saint Gregory, after supper one evening, as their day of prayer and mutual sharing of spiritual matters was nearing an end, Saint Scholastica begged her brother to stay the night so they could continue their discussion. He refused, as he would never spend a night away from his monastery.

While in tears, Saint Scholastica lowered her head upon her hands and prayed. A fierce thunderstorm arose, preventing Saint Benedict from leaving, and in shock he asked Saint Scholastica what she had done. She replied, "I asked a favor of you, and you refused it. I asked it of God, and God has granted it!"

God answered the prayer of the one who loved more. Saint Gregory comments that her prayer was answered because the love of a sister for her brother overcame the law of Saint Benedict's rule. Let us always remember that love should be the first rule of our lives.

We also have the feast of Saint Valentine on February 14th and remember that:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." John 3:16

"The things that we love tell us who we are." Saint Thomas Aquinas

During this month of February, may we be attentive to God's love and may we continue to share that love with others.

Sister Catherine Nehotte, OSB
Prioress





Never Beyond Love

by Sister Mary White, OSB

Love expands; fear confines. Love has no boundaries because it is born and bred in every human being. Our love is invincible because its origin is divine. It is never lost and cannot be destroyed. Nothing can separate us from love.

Yet fear can make it seem so. We allow threats of terrorism to confine us to our homes with doors bolted. But a surrender to fear also bolts our hearts, leaving us with a sense of false safety. Even love—*especially* love—seems dangerous

I was taught, as were you, to love; and I can recount many acts of love throughout my life. Yet I also learned early in life that love, which feels so warm and good, also comes with someone else's baggage. Sometimes, what we are asked to give, or give up, in return seems too much of a risk.

“Love has no boundaries because it is born and bred in every human being.”

We develop ways to protect ourselves. We begin measuring love, watching our backs. We build fences—even fortresses.

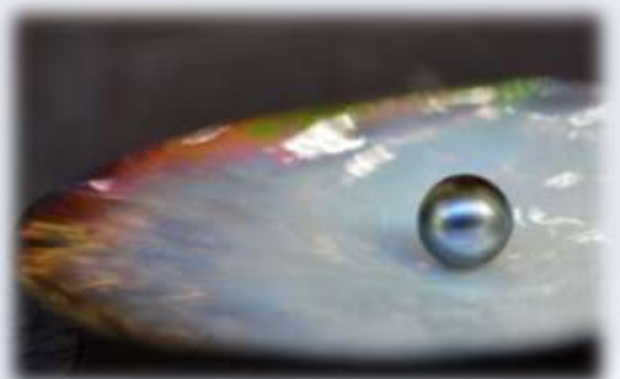
No matter how strong a fortress fear builds, we are never beyond love *if we choose not to be*. Love endures within and around us, present even in darkest times. We need not seek love, for it is always present. There is but one thing needed: *Love must be chosen.*

Do you recall the gospel story of the “pearl of great price”? Once the merchant had found it, he went off and sold everything to buy the pearl.

The pearl was there for him to take freely. It would still be there no matter how long it took for him to accumulate the price needed. When he was ready, he purchased the pearl.

This is so with us. We either decide the “pearl” is worth investing in and find what we are willing to pay or we continue living without the treasure because the price seems too high.

The pearl is love, the giving and the receiving of it. We need not find something to pay or barter. Unlike a precious pearl, love takes nothing that we don't already have.



Eyes Open: A Trip to the Border

by Pat Melody, OblSB

Recently I took a trip to the border in Nogales, Mexico. Along with me came donations of money, suitcases, and toiletries that went to help those struggling and in need. I was especially grateful for the many prayers the Oblates sent with me.

It was intense, trying to do and see so much in such a short time. Talking to the people at the border and hearing their stories, serving food at two different sites, being present at court trials and seeing people so severely punished for just trying to survive, seeing for myself the horrible, cruel wall. These difficulties were just the tip of the iceberg.

It was so overwhelming it took me a couple of weeks to “come back” emotionally upon my return. I would come out of my local Target and, for a brief moment, couldn’t remember where I was.

I am torn with compassion and anger at what is happening and now. I struggle with trying to discern what I am going to do about it because something must be done.

Thank you all who donated! Some of your clothing donations went to Listening House, and were so appreciated as the numbers and needs there are growing. If you would like a tour of Listening House’s new location on Maria Avenue, please let me know, spm@icloud.com. It’s known as the “Living Room for the Homeless,” and being there is truly an experience beyond words.

Pat is pictured at far left below with fellow pilgrims in Nogales. All are welcome to the Monastery for Pat’s presentation about her journey (details below).

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:1-12 (NRSVCE)

WE WERE THERE: STORIES FROM THE BORDER

Sunday, February 23 | 2:00-3:00 p.m.
St. Paul's Monastery





Commemorative Pavers

Honoring Those Who Light Our Way

Our Gathering Plaza is blessed with pavers engraved with messages from the Sisters, Oblates, relatives, and friends of St. Paul's Monastery. Click on the button below to print the form and create your own paver message to commemorate a special occasion or honor a Sister, your parents, other family members, or friends. Your tribute paver makes a difference in the prayers of the Sisters and all who visit the Plaza.

Thank you and God Bless you!



Order by
Aug. 14 for
Fall 2020
Installation

Sizes

4 x 8 Paver : \$125

Up to 3 lines of text,
18 characters per line

8 x 8 Paver : \$250

Up to 6 lines of text,
18 characters per line

[Click Here to
Print the Paver
Order Form.](#)



The Porter: At the Threshold of Hospitality

by Kiely Todd Roska

Kiely, Associate Director of the Benedictine Center, holds an M.A. in Religion and Theology and a Master's Degree in Public Policy

In *the Rule*, St. Benedict commends the role of the porter, the person stationed at the front door and responsible for greeting Monastery visitors. Whenever a visitor arrived, the porter was supposed to shout, “Thanks be to God!” or “Your blessing please!” (RB 66).

The porter embodied the commitment to greet everyone as Christ, engaging every new arrival as a person carrying a blessing.

Members of the Benedictine Center staff and team of volunteers, often get to practice the role of porter at the Monastery, being entrusted with the task of greeting every guest with the “warmth of love.” We welcome people in whatever state they arrive for a time of retreat.

The privilege of the porter is to live on the edge of expectancy. Some guests arrive full of gratitude and joy, brimming with a story they simply must share—even with a stranger. Others come primed for learning, ready to join others in conversation about how they might live out Benedictine values in their daily lives in meaningful ways. Some come seeking solitude or beauty, taking in the latest art exhibit. Still others arrive tired, weary, or worn down from life’s pressures.

However guests arrive, all are seeking renewal for their journey.

At St. Paul’s Monastery, pilgrims find porters ready to listen for what a person really needs, and eager to offer the gifts the Sisters share: quiet, nourishment, rest, companions in prayer. However and whenever you arrive, know that a team of porters is eagerly and warmly awaiting your arrival!



Welcome to Taizé Prayer

Taizé prayer is a beautiful, meditative prayer of short verses sung repeatedly. We celebrate Taizé prayer at the Monastery on the third Friday of each month at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome.

In this new year, we are in need of volunteer cantors and musicians to lead us in prayer. *If interested, please call 651-777-8181 and ask for Sister Karen Sames or Sister Jacqueline Leiter.*

Book Review: Thomas Merton's *When the Trees Say Nothing*

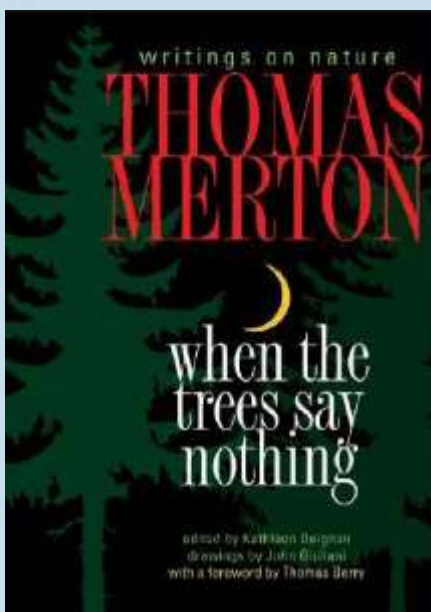
by Sister Louise Inhofer, OSB

Now that the busy holidays are over, do you look forward to a little more time to read? I know I do.

There are so many books to choose from that I am like a kid in a candy shop with my nose right up to the glass counter. Let's see!-do I want spiritual reading? Or perhaps a good story from the fiction section? Most likely it will be one of each.

A while ago, a guest returned a book to me with an apology because it was overdue. She

couldn't say enough about it, so I read the jacket AND decided to read it. [When the Trees Say Nothing](#) is a book based on Thomas Merton's journal writings on nature, edited by Kathleen Deignan.



Merton was a true lover of nature and this is the first time his writings about nature are put together in one place. He has put the sacred together with nature and it shows him to be truly an environmentalist or eco-spiritualist.

The foreword written by Thomas Berry, and the introduction show wonderful insights into Thomas Merton's life, his journey from a Franciscan to a Cistercian heart to a Zen mind.

Kathleen Deignan has wonderfully sorted his writings into categories; seasons, elements, firmaments, creatures, festivals, presences and sanctuaries. Each topic contains short thoughts about what he did and

what he saw. And each one is a meditation in itself. No wonder it takes so long to read it.

After reading the foreword, introduction and first two chapters, I can see why the guest was enthralled with this book and kept it so long. Now I am reading an overdue book myself and since I am the librarian will not be getting any calls about it. However, it would be nice of me to return it so someone else may have the same pleasure reading this wonderful book.

**heartfelt love sublime
radiating God's presence
be my valentine**

Haiku by Sister Rose Alice



Above: North High music teacher, Matt Sieberg (left) and student violinist

Our dietary department prepared a delicious meal to satisfy any palate, and the food was served by the Monastic Leadership Team. Happy New Year to you as we welcome 2020.

Music for the Sisters

by Sister Linda Soler, OSB, Monastic Leadership Team

Our Monastic Community's traditional celebration of New Year is a party following morning Mass. This year we enjoyed a musical program from North High students, under the direction of their teacher, Mr. Matt Sieberg (www.matthewsieberg.com). The program began with a cello, violin and keyboard trio. The choir then sang Christmas songs. In the photo below you can see how much the Sisters enjoyed the entertainment!



SPONSOR A CHAIR

Would you help us make St. Paul's Monastery a more comfortable and inviting space for our guests? As part of our Benedictine ministry, we welcome all guests as Christ. This welcome includes not only an invitation into our monastery for support and spiritual instruction, but also physical comfort.



Sample of the new conference chairs from our friends at SOS Office Furniture

Replacing our well-worn conference room chairs is an important way to make the Monastery more comfortable and welcoming to our guests. While they have served us for many years, there have been many updates to chair design since their purchase. The new chairs (example pictured at left) have a hydraulic height adjustment lever, easy-to-clean materials, and a more ergonomic design. They will be more easily adapted to individual comfort levels, benefiting the Sisters and all Monastery guests!

Can you help us cover the cost of 35 new conference center chairs? Whether you can sponsor a table (six chairs), one chair, or even just a portion of a chair—your donation makes possible this important improvement to our Monastery hospitality ministry and the needs of our guests.

We are so very grateful for your donations, which directly support the Sisters and their ministries. When you donate to St. Paul's Monastery you help the Sisters welcome all as Christ, from Benedictine Center program participants to retreat and event guests. We are blessed by your support and pray for you daily.

Blessings,

The Benedictine Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery

[Donate Now](#)

Maple Tree Monastery Childcare

The Maple Tree Monastery Childcare preschoolers love going outside all year round. Earlier this month, they enjoyed making a snowman. It took some teamwork and the children were pleased with the results!

Established by the Sisters in 1991, Maple Tree continues as a thriving ministry of St. Paul's Monastery. The connection of love and support is mutually important and beneficial as the children visit the Sisters to sing and celebrate the holidays. The Sisters look forward to the first Maple Tree visit of 2020: the Valentine's Day program!



SEEING GOD 2020 Juried Exhibit of Sacred Art



Don't miss the opening reception of the 2020 Seeing God Juried Exhibit **TOMORROW, Wednesday, January 29 from 7:00—8:30 p.m.!** Awards will be announced as part of a brief program at 7:45 p.m. and refreshments will be served.

Sacred art contributes to keeping us mindful of God's abiding presence. The annual Seeing God Juried Exhibit features contemporary regional artists who work in that spirit. Their works will be exhibited and available for public viewing daily, **9:00 a.m.— 6:00 p.m., from January 29 through March 13.**

Pictured: "Keep Me Safe" by Jean Wright, from the 2019 Seeing God exhibit. Come and see this year's entries!

"Keep Me Safe" by Jean Wright,
from the 2019 Juried Exhibit.



BENEDICTINE CENTER OF ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY

Radical Hospitality: Living with Real Generosity

with Sister Kathleen Atkinson, OSB, and Rev. Zanne Ness

Friday, February 28, 7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

Seven years ago, Sister Kathleen Atkinson did something that she had often thought about doing but had never pursued. She picked up the phone, called the North Dakota State Penitentiary Chaplain and asked if there was anything she could do as a volunteer at the prison. That phone call began a journey that has changed her life.

Come hear Sister Kathleen's story about Ministry on the Margins and how practical Benedictine values have led the way. Allow yourself to listen for your own unique desire to become a change-maker. Imagine what social engagement is possible within your own settings when you are tuned in to hope and resurrection.

This public presentation kicks off the weekend retreat (through Sunday, March 1 at 1:00 p.m.) *Everyday Prophets: How Small Acts of Courage and Compassion Change the World* (see below).

Everyday Prophets: How Small Acts of Courage & Compassion Change the World

with Sister Kathleen Atkinson, OSB, and Rev. Zanne Ness

Friday, February 28, 7:00 p.m.— Sunday, March 1, 1:00 p.m.

"When we think 'prophetic' we need not always think grandly about public tasks. . . It is the vocation of the prophet to keep alive the ministry of imagination." —Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*

Being called a prophet may seem beyond the ordinary circumstances of our everyday lives. But what if it's true? What if something needs to be done to confront the world's numbness, and we're the ones to do it? Even small acts of compassion and courage inspire hope. Sister Kathleen and Rev. Ness are seasoned partners in ministry and skilled guides in awakening the imagination of ordinary people so that we might create more compassionate, just communities. Settle in to the prayerful monastic rhythms of St. Paul's Monastery for a weekend, exploring how you are uniquely and meaningfully called to make a difference in the world. Come for a prayerful and inspiring experience.



Beyond Fear: Helping Communities Choose 'Welcome'

with Sister Kathleen
Atkinson, OSB, and
Rev. Zanne Ness

Thurs., February 27; 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

The foundation of welcome is the inherent dignity of the human person, as created in the image and likeness of God.

We are called to welcome others with a presence that is more than just polite and that extends beyond our reservations. We are called to the kind of hospitality that is communal, revolutionary, and transforming.

But there have always been challenges to such hospitality, like unknown travelers stopping for assistance and newcomers who come with their own ideas about community life.

All the more reason for Benedict to insist that we "welcome all guests as Christ"!

Come to improve your readiness for moving beyond discomfort toward truly human welcome.

**To register or for further
information, e-mail or call us:**

benedictinecenter@stpaulsmonastery.org

651.777.7251

Prayer Schedule

“Nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God.”

—Rule of Benedict, Chap. 43



SUNDAY

Morning Prayer: 10:00 AM

Eucharist: 11:00 AM

Evening Prayer: 5:00 PM

*For further information, call
651-777-8181 or visit us online at
www.stpaulsmonastery.org*

MONDAY–SATURDAY

Morning Prayer: 8:00 AM

Midday Prayer: 11:30 AM

(Mon., Fri., Sat.)

Eucharist: 11:30 AM

(Tue.—Thu.)

Evening Prayer: 5:00 PM

Taizé Prayer: 7:00 PM every 3rd Friday of the month



COMMUNITY PRAYER MINISTRY

Here to Serve You in Prayer



We Would Love to Hear from You

Let us, in fellowship, “lay (our) petitions before the Lord God with the utmost humility and sincere devotion” (*Rule of St. Benedict*, Chap. 20). If you would like to send an online prayer request, the Monastery website has two different ways to do so. You can use the “Prayer Requests” link at the top of our home page (www.stpaulsmonastery.org). Or you can go to the “Ministries” tab and select “Community Prayer Ministry.” Prayer requests go to the Sisters in the Healthcare Center who pray for these intentions during their 3:30 p.m. daily Rosary. May God bless you today.

*We are grateful
for your support!*

[click Here to Find out more](#)



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651-777-8181
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To connect with or
support Community
ministries visit us at:

www.stpaulsmonastery.org



St. Paul's Monastery

Mission Statement

We, the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery, are a community who live Gospel values as expressed in the Rule of St. Benedict. Through our monastic life and wise stewardship, we nurture contemplative presence in service of Church and society.